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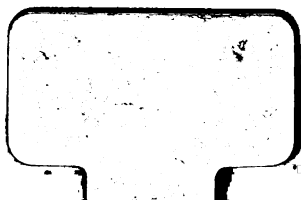
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**KATE'S PASSION ON THE CROQUET GROUND (p 40).**

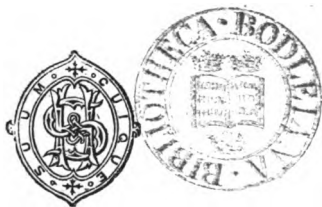
# LEVELSIE MANOR.

BY

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"THE GREATEST IS CHARITY," "TREVOR COURT," ETC.



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***“Patient in tribulation.”***

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# LEVELSIE MANOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *A LETTER FROM INDIA.*

**M**AMMA, there's a foreign letter for you by your plate," exclaimed a boy of sixteen, as his mother entered the room.

Mrs. Darville walked to the breakfast-table and took her seat, while her children, as they followed her example, watched her movements with eager curiosity.

"Do you know the writing, mamma?" asked Laura.

"I think I do, my dear children," she said; "but is your curiosity too strong to wait till after breakfast?"

"No, mamma; but only tell us one thing, is it from papa?" said a younger boy.

"Why, Frank," exclaimed his eldest brother, "you don't suppose they travel in balloons in America. Papa was in Canada when he wrote to mamma last week, and he must have travelled

in a balloon or with wings to get to India so quickly."

"Oh, yes, I forgot," replied the good-tempered boy of eleven. "I'll have a look at my geography by-and-by, and see how many miles it is from Quebec to Calcutta."

"A jolly long task you've set yourself, youngster, and no mistake," said Percy. "I'd rather you than me."

"But I like doing sums," said the boy. "I think it's no end of fun to find out, and make it prove, and all that."

Mrs. Darville smiled. The taste for figures, which her younger boy inherited from his father, always surprised her. Frank was a clever little arithmetician for his age, and bid fair to be equally successful in mathematics. He and his brother Percy, pupils at a public school, were now spending the long vacation at Levelsie Manor, a small but pleasant estate in Essex. The large dining-room, in which they now sat at breakfast, had a broad French window opening on a rose-covered verandah, which surrounded the house on three sides.

The centre of this window stood open, and as Mrs. Darville sat at breakfast she could look out over a lovely prospect of park-like grounds, dotted with noble trees, and fields and meadows

bordering the estate on a slope to the valley beneath. The spire, which had been added to the square old tower of the village church, and the roofs and chimneys of Levelsie, rose on the opposite side of the valley, through which ran the train, looking like a toy from the heights above it.

While the young people ate their breakfast and discussed the distance of Quebec or Montreal from Calcutta, Mrs. Darville remained silently reflecting on the letter which lay by her plate.

Well she remembered the lady whose writing on the envelope she had recognised. Old memories crowded upon her—the days when Alice Wilton and herself had been schoolfellows. Had the proud, impatient temper been subdued since then by trial and sorrow? Mrs. Darville could not answer this question; for the friend of her youth had written but seldom, and the death of Colonel Eyre had only reached her through the medium of the *Gazette*.

Major Darville's regiment had been stationed in Canada for more than a year, and when obliged to join it he most reluctantly left his wife at home, as the doctor assured him Mrs. Darville's constitution would be unable to endure the Canadian winter. Added to this, he

wished his four children to be educated in England, under their mother's eye.

He decided, however, to exchange into a home regiment as soon as possible, and if unable to do so, to retire on half-pay. The house and estate near Levelsie had become the property of his wife on the death of her mother, and though the income derived from it was less than a thousand a year, it was quite enough for the simple requirements and habits of the Major and his family.

The two boys, Percy and Frank, as we know, were now at a public school. The girls, Laura, and little Gerty aged five, had hitherto been taught by their mother. Laura at fourteen was forward enough in her studies to require masters, but none were to be obtained from a nearer spot than Chelmsford, ten miles, and nearly half of that distance across the country, the nearest station being five miles from Levelsie.

"There appears no other plan but to send my dear child to school," Mrs. Darville would say to herself with a sigh. "And I know she ought to mix with other girls of her own age, but I dread the thought."

Some such reflections as these passed through the mind of Mrs. Darville while she silently partook of her breakfast and listened to the re-

marks of the young people. At last she took up the letter and opened it. One glance at the contents, and then the mother said,—

“If you have finished, children, you can leave the table; I will tell you about the letter by-and-by. It is from Colonel Eyre’s widow, who was my friend at school, and I wish to read the letter while I am alone.”

Without another question the young people quickly withdrew, and snatching from the hall their garden hats, were soon out of sight under the shade of a lofty tree on the croquet lawn.

“Oh, I say, Laura,” said Percy, “what can mamma’s letter be about? Did you see how awfully pale she was after she had only looked at it? Did you ever hear of this Mrs. Eyre?”

“Oh, yes, often. Mamma used to tell me about her being so impetuous and passionate when she couldn’t have it all her own way, and so proud.”

“I wonder she was mamma’s friend then,” said Frank.

“Oh, she was so fond of mamma; and after she had been impatient and rude to her she would cry, and be so sorry, and beg mamma to forgive her, and say that she didn’t mean it.”

“Ah, yes, I know; I’m one of the impatient ones,” replied Percy, “and I’m always sorry



afterwards, and all that. I hope, however, this hot-tempered lady isn't coming here; if she does, there'll be no end of rows, I can tell you."

"But, Percy, she's grown up now, and married; she wouldn't have those silly passions like boys and girls do. Mamma is never in a passion."

"Mamma!" exclaimed the boy; "I should think not. Why, even when she's angry it makes me more ashamed than if I had been horsewhipped, because she speaks so gently, and seems so sorry for me,"

"Well, don't let us talk any more about Mrs. Eyre," said Laura. "I thought we were going to walk to Levelsie, and I want the new music I ordered."

"We may as well wait a little, Laura," replied Percy; "mamma won't take long to read that letter, and then she'll send for us. Let's have a turn at the balls and mallets: the grass is quite dry."

Leaving the young people to their early croquet, we will return to the house, and discover the result of the foreign letter.

Mrs. Darville, to be safe from interruption, rang the bell for the breakfast to be removed, and then ascended to her dressing-room, and, after locking both doors, seated herself in an

easy-chair to read it. The letter ran as follows. No wonder the first few lines had startled her.

“ GARDEN REACH, CALCUTTA,  
*March 4th, 186—.*

“MY DEAREST FRIEND,—When this letter reaches you, the hand that penned it will be cold in the grave. You mentioned in your last, that you had seen Fred’s death in the *Times*. I have been too ill to write since till now, and this letter is only to be forwarded to you in case of my death. I am about to appeal to you on behalf of my only surviving child—all the rest are gone—my Kate is now an orphan, thirteen years of age, yet precocious and womanly, as children born in India often are.

“She inherits a little of my impetuous spirit, but her other good qualities quite make up for these little tempers, and she is as ready to ask forgiveness as I was.

“You are a mother now, and will understand these childish outbursts, and therefore, my dear friend, I implore you to receive my orphan child into your home, to be trained with your own children, and to be taught that gentle self-control which you possessed when we were girls together. Sorrow and trial have taught me patience, and I would fain spare my child from

such severe punishment as I have had, by having her taught patience in youth.

"Dear, dear friend, will you for old friendship's sake do this for me? Let my child be taught in the schoolroom with your children, or if your girls are sent to school, let Kate go also. My brother and my husband's brother are trustees for my daughter. I have arranged in my will that three hundred a year shall be paid into the bank in your name for my child's expenses. My brother and his wife, who live in England, are very anxious to have the care of my daughter, but I have left her to the sole guardianship of Major Darville and yourself, if you consent to such a charge.

"Do not refuse me, dearest friend, for the sake of our young days, and for the memory of olden times. Kate will have left India for England before you receive this letter, under the care of the captain, who will bring her safely, if all be well, and place her in the care of my brother, Charles Wilton. He will write to you on the subject as soon as she arrives in England.

"Once more, dear friend, will you comply with the dying request of

"Your loving, anxious friend,  
"ALICE EYRE?"

Mrs. Darville rested the hand which held the letter in her lap, and leaned back in her chair to reflect on its contents in a state of bewildered anxiety. Could she introduce into the loving and unselfish family at Levelsie Manor a girl who possessed evidently so much of the impatient, selfish spirit of her mother? Mrs. Eyre, no doubt, in her anxiety to make the best of her young daughter's character, had admitted as little of the truth as possible respecting her temper. "Could I manage or hope to influence for good a girl with a temper so proud, haughty, and impetuous as her mother's? Could I preserve my own dear children from the danger of an evil example?" she asked herself.

"No," she replied to her own mental questions, "not in my own strength or wisdom, but strength and wisdom I can ask for from above."

And then to her memory came the words, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and it shall be given him."

The mother's heart pitied her friend's child; she rose, and kneeling by the chair, prayed to be guided in her decision, and that if she complied with the dying mother's request she might have wisdom to influence her child, and to pre-

vent the effects of evil example on her own children.

Thus fortified, Mrs. Darville left her room and proceeded downstairs to look for the young people. The September day was one of those which in this autumn month so often resembles summer in brightness and beauty, without its intense heat.

Mrs. Darville also took from the inner hall a garden hat and cape, and passed out towards a spot where voices and croquet raps told her she would find the players.

Although she had entered her thirty-eighth year, Mrs. Darville still retained enough of her youthful beauty and graceful form to cause her children still to address her, as in their early days, as "pretty mamma." Yet to old age Mrs. Darville would no doubt deserve that childish style of address ; for it was the reflection of a loving, patient, unselfish spirit that glorified the gentle face of Alice Eyre's friend.

The slight figure in the simple morning dress soon became visible to the players between the trees. Down went the mallets at the words, "Here comes mamma," and away they all started to meet her. But another claimant on her love had arrived before them.

Gerty, attended by a pleasant-looking person,

who had been nursery governess to all Mrs. Darville's children, had left the house a few minutes before her mother.

"Oh, Trotty," exclaimed the child, "there's mamma ; may I go to her ?"

A nod gave permission, and therefore, when the elder children approached, Gerty was walking by her mother, holding her hand with a firm grasp.

"I want you all to come into the dining-room for a few minutes, my children," said the mother : "at least, all excepting Gerty. Go to Miss Trotman, darling," she continued, addressing the child, "and presently you shall have a game of croquet with mamma."

The child obeyed at once, and then the three elder children entered the house with their mother, and followed her to the dining-room with a kind of apprehensive feeling of something wrong.

"Come here, Laura," said her mother, as she seated herself on the sofa. Frank followed, and took his place on the other side of his mother, while tall, manly Percy seated himself across a chair, and looked over the back. He was the first to speak.

"Mamma, dear, you look pale ; is there anything wrong in that letter ? I'm sure it's

some awful nuisance: I wish it had never come."

"Nonsense, my boy," she said; "it has more to do with Laura than you. Laura," she continued, turning to the young girl, and placing her arm round her, "would you like a companion?"

"What companion, mamma—a girl?"

"Yes, my dear, one about your own age."

"Oh, yes, mamma, indeed I should; Gertie's too young, and my brothers are boys."

"Of course they are," exclaimed Percy, "and you like those boys for companions no end, now don't you?"

"Yes, indeed I do, dear Percy, you know that; but you can't sit and work with me at needlework, or learn to be domestic when mamma's teaching me; besides, when you're away, I've nobody but little Gertie and dear mamma," she added, pressing closely to the encircling arm; "but still I should like a companion of my own age."

"Well then," said her mother, "I think there is one coming to you from India: she is just thirteen, and her mamma was my dearest friend at school. Mrs. Eyre, the lady whose letter I received this morning, wrote that letter on her dying bed, asking me to receive her only child,

and bring her up with my children till she is twenty-one. When Mrs. Eyre wrote, she had parted with her daughter, to send her to England with some friends, who offered to take charge of her and place her with her uncle in London. The letter came to me *via* Brindisi, but the passenger ship to Southampton will not be more than a few days or a week later, so I may expect to hear of Kate Eyre's arrival next week."

"Oh, how soon, mamma! and is her name Kate?"

"I like that name," said Frank.

"And you are all quite ready to receive her and treat her as a sister?"

"I am," said Laura; "I shall be delighted."

"And so shall I," exclaimed Frank; "it's downright jolly news."

"And what does my eldest son say?" asked Mrs. Darville, with a smile.

"Well, mother," said the youth of sixteen, who used that name when he wished to be manly, "I think Mrs. Eyre showed her knowledge of her friend's value when she begged you to take charge of her daughter; and, like Frank, I think it's rather jolly to have another sister for Laura."


"Then you are willing that I shall write and agree to receive the poor orphan?"



"Yes, mamma, we all are," were the words that burst forth in chorus. "And now we'll finish our game," said Percy, leading the way to the lawn.

## CHAPTER II.

### *THE NEW SISTER.*

N the platform of the Chelmsford Station, a fortnight after the letter from India had caused such an excitement at Levelsie Manor, stood a dark woman in an Ayah's dress, and a young girl.

The former was trying, in her broken English, to point out the boxes which belonged to her young lady, till the latter, who stood shivering and complaining, was obliged at last to interfere.

"We want a carriage," she said haughtily to the porter, "and my boxes have my name and address, if you can read it—'Miss Eyre;' and I wish to be driven to Mrs. Darville's, Levelsie Manor."

"All right, Miss," said the man. "Here, Bill, just see if there's hosses at 'The Crown,' as will take a fare ten miles, to Levelsie Manor. Please come in here, Miss," he added, addressing the young lady, and leading the way to the first-class waiting-room, where a pleasant fire burned

in the grate. "I've sent for a carriage ; it will soon be here."

Kate Eyre, who was tired after her journey, and felt the cold of an English September very painfully, rushed to the fire, and drawing a chair in front of it, seated herself there.

"If England's always like this, Ayah," she said, "I shall hate it. Don't you feel the cold?"

"Yes, missie, but we'll soon get to nice warm house and kind friends. What time your watch say, missie?"

"Half-past three," she replied ; "but a carriage and horses won't go as fast as the train."

"No, missie, sahib, but this room warm, and we no feel so cold after here."

On this same afternoon a great excitement respecting the new arrivals prevailed among the young people at the Manor House.

"When will they be here, mamma?" asked Frank.

"Not before half-past five," replied Mrs. Darville: "the train does not arrive at Chelmsford till 3.20, and a carriage and pair cannot possibly do the ten miles in less than two hours, because of the hills."

The young people, however, were accustomed to employ themselves while waiting for any

particular event, instead of making everybody uncomfortable by restless idleness.

The year was approaching the autumnal equinox ; therefore, as the sunset drew near, it became dark enough at half-past five to have the lamps lighted in the hall and dining-room for dinner at six. The scene, therefore, upon which the young Indian girl and her Ayah were about to enter made the welcome brighter.

In the long low drawing-room, with its carved ceiling, its picture-covered walls, and tasteful furniture, Mrs. Darville and her children waited. Gerty stood by her mother, asking questions about the expected arrivals. The boys were reading, and Laura engaged in crochets ; yet each was listening partly to their mother and partly for the sound of carriage wheels.

"Mamma," said Gerty, "Percy says there's a black woman coming ; is it true ?"

"Not black, Gerty, but dark brown : she is Katie's nurse, and is called an Ayah."

"What a funny name ! but Katie doesn't have a nurse if she's as big as Laura !"

"No, not now ; but Ayah used to nurse Katie when she was little, and I know she's very kind to her now, and waits upon her."

"I shouldn't like a black nurse," said Gerty.

At this moment carriage wheels and the tramp of horses were heard.

"Here they are, mamma," exclaimed Percy, starting up, and in a few minutes all was bustle in the hall, as the steps of the carriage were let down, and a young girl alighted. Mrs. Darville met her at the door, and said,—

"Welcome to your new home, my dear Kate!"

"Oh, I'm so cold," was her reply, as she submitted to a motherly kiss; "let me go to a warm room!" and the shivering child, without noticing her cousins, rushed past them to the open drawing-room door, and threw herself on the hearthrug before the fire which had been lighted for her special comfort.

The young people followed her in, utterly amazed. Mrs. Darville remained to speak to the Ayah, and presently she called Percy to her assistance.

"Just see to the boxes and parcels, my boy, will you?" she said; "the man will help to carry them upstairs. Are these all, Ayah?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, sahib," said the woman; "I look in the carriage, there none left."

"That will do then. Sarah," added her mistress, addressing the housemaid, who stood looking with awed astonishment at the foreign-

er's white head-gear, and long, massive gold earrings, "take Ayah into the kitchen. She has come from a hot country, and feels the cold terribly. I'll take care of Miss Eyre," she added, as the woman looked earnestly at the drawing-room; "you go and get warm, don't be afraid!"

And so at last the boxes were all carried up, the men paid, and the carriage dismissed, and after ordering dinner to be served immediately, Mrs. Darville returned to the drawing-room. Kate Eyre still sat in a strange yet not ungraceful attitude on the floor. She had in those few minutes made acquaintance most unceremoniously with the young people. She had thrown off her bonnet, and a shower of dark ringlets fell around her neck and shoulders. She rose from the floor as Mrs. Darville entered, exclaiming,—

"I'm so warm now; where's my Ayah? I want her."

"Ayah is warming herself also, my dear; but if you would like to wash your hands, Laura will show you to your bedroom."

The young lady hesitated for a moment, but something in the tone and manner of Mrs. Darville implied that she expected to be obeyed; she drew a rich Indian scarf round her shoul-

ders, and seizing Laura's hand, they left the room together.

"The dinner-bell will ring presently, Laura," said her mother: "don't keep Kate in the cold."

"No, mamma, we won't be long," replied Laura, as she led Kate to a prettily-furnished bedroom adjoining her own.

"Oh, how nice!" exclaimed the young stranger, "and a fire in the room, too!" and she again knelt down before it.

"Please make haste," exclaimed Laura from the next room.

"What for?" came from the hearthrug.

"Are you not hungry?"

"Yes; but the dinner can wait."

"Oh, no! mamma never waits for us," said Laura, returning into the room; "and here's a towel, and soap and water," she added as she poured some into the basin.

Kate rose slowly, saying to herself, "I shan't like this, I know! I'll have Ayah when I like, and if they won't wait dinner for me——"

But what Kate Eyre meant to do in such a case was not then decided; the dinner-bell rang, and with a little hurried assistance Laura got the wayward young lady downstairs into the dining-room.

The stranger was placed on the side of the

table nearest the fire, and next to Mrs. Darville. The bright cheerful room, and the appearance of the table, quieted for a time the rebellious thoughts of the young girl, and she behaved so well and appeared so amenable to the customs of an English dinner-table, that Mrs. Darville's fears gradually subsided, at least for that evening ; she knew too well how soon the novelty of a position wears off, especially with young people.

In the drawing-room that evening Laura and her brothers did all they could to entertain the stranger. Books full of engravings and little birthday presents were shown to her. Laura at Kate's request, played one of her prettiest pieces on the piano ; but it created no envious feelings in the indulged child ; for when asked to play, she said,—

“ Oh, Mrs. Darville, I can't play like Laura does ; only little pieces out of the instruction book, or by ear. May I have a master to teach me ? ”

“ Yes, my dear, by-and-by. Laura has had no master yet : I teach her.”

“ Oh do you ? will you please teach me ? I'm very fond of music, but poor mamma was ill so long, I had only a governess, and I didn't learn much.”



"I will teach you with Laura, my dear Kate, anything you like to learn."

"Oh, thank you," she replied. "I'm sure I shall be happy here; it's so nice to be with other girls and boys; but I suppose you're a man," she added, addressing Percy; "why, you are ever so much taller than your mamma."

There was a general laugh at this, and then Kate exclaimed suddenly,—

"Oh! I've got such a number of presents for you, Mrs. Darville, and all of them in one of my boxes. May I go and get them?"

"Not to-night, my dear; there is no time; look at the clock. You must be tired after your journey. We shall have prayers at nine, and then Laura goes to bed."

Kate Eyre would have returned angry and no doubt rude words at this refusal, but the word *prayers* stopped her. What could it mean? and in silence she seated herself and waited.

Percy approached the table, and opened the leaves of another scrap book, which appeared to please her; but every now and then she would raise her eyes and glance at the clock on the mantelpiece. It struck at last, and then Laura, folding her work and seating herself by her mother on the sofa, beckoned to Kate to

sit on the other side of Mrs. Darville, Frank placing himself next his sister.

The door opened, and the housemaid entered with two books ; one she placed on the table in front of Percy, the other on the opposite corner, near her mistress. She then arranged four chairs against the wall, and in a few moments three other servants entered, accompanied by the Ayah, and took possession of the chairs.

Kate started at the appearance of her Ayah, but she only ventured to smile and nod at her.

"Have they taken care of you, Ayah?" said Mrs. Darville.

"Yes, ma'am, sahib : I got nice dinner, and warm very much good, thank you."

"Do you know what we are going to do, Ayah?"

"Yes, ma'am, sahib : pray to God and read Bible. I no read, but I hear missionary tell all about Jesus Christ, and I love good book."

"Well, you are going to hear it now," replied Mrs. Darville. "We are quite ready, Percy."

Custom had given the boy courage. His mother had allotted to him the position of Bible-reader morning and evening, during his father's absence, and his clear young voice did not falter now, as he read the story of the prodigal son.

Then Miss Trotman took a seat at the piano, and all present joined in singing that sweet hymn of Keble's—

“Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.”

Mrs. Darville then knelt with the rest, and after reading a prayer easy to be understood by all present, evening family prayers came to an end.

“Now, Laura and Frank, say good night,” said Mrs. Darville ; “and, Ayah, I daresay Miss Kate will want your help in her bedroom. You know where you are to sleep.”

“Yes, ma'am, sahib ; little room close to dear missie. Ma'am sahib much kind.”

Quite subdued and surprised, Kate rose, and kissing Mrs. Darville, left the room with Laura, and ascended the stairs, clinging fondly to the arm of the faithful Hindoo.

## CHAPTER III.

### *THE FIRST OUTBREAK.*

**T**HE family at Levelsie Manor breakfasted at eight in summer, and at half-past eight during the short days. The residents in India, as a rule, rise early, that they may enjoy the cooler air of the morning, and sleep in curtained and closed rooms from noon till three o'clock. During these hours the heat is so intense for nearly nine months of the year, that this rest, which is called a *siesta*, is absolutely necessary, especially for Europeans. This heat is also greatly modified by the movements of the punkah, a large fan with a deep frill of calico, which is moved up and down with ropes pulled by a native servant stationed in the verandah outside the house.

On this fine September morning, therefore, Laura was surprised to hear Kate and the Ayah talking and moving about soon after seven. Presently she heard the blind drawn up, and the voice of Kate exclaim,—

“Oh ! look, Ayah, isn't it beautiful, that pretty

garden and the green grass, and all those large trees! Oh! I wish it was breakfast-time."

"So it is, missie. Look at watch: near eight o'clock. Prayer-bell rings at eight: maids tell me that."

"Prayers again!" exclaimed Kate.

"Yes, missie; first thing morning, last thing night."

"*We* never had prayers in India, Ayah."

"No, missie."

At this moment Laura knocked, and then as the Ayah opened the door between the rooms, she said, "Good morning, Katie; may I come in?"

"Oh, yes. I'm so glad you're up and dressed," said Kate, as the two girls kissed each other. "Will you just go into the garden with me before breakfast? it does look so beautiful."

"Yes, I'll go with you, Kate; but we must keep near the house, for the prayer-bell will ring presently. Put on your hat and something warm," she added: "the mornings are cold in England."

The Ayah soon provided a warm cloak and hat for her young lady, and then with hasty steps the two girls descended the stairs and passed through the open window of the dining-room to the verandah, from which could be seen

on a clear day, the village of Levelsie, the line of rail to Chelmsford, and sometimes the passing train. A mist now rested on the valley, but while the two girls stood there, Laura pointing out the gardens, the orchards, and the croquet lawn in one direction, and the farmyard and other buildings in another, the mist began to disperse, and in a few minutes the spire of the church, surrounded by trees, then the roofs of the houses, and even the narrow streets, became visible to the delighted eyes of Kate.

She had scarcely time to exclaim, "Oh, Laura, is that the village?" when, a few miles farther on in the valley, could be seen the train, with its cloud of white steam winding like a toy towards the tunnel entrance under the neighbouring hill.

"Oh, how small it appears! and what a tiny hole the tunnel looks! I'm glad there were no tunnels between London and Chelmsford when I came."

At this moment the bell rang, and when Mrs. Darville and the boys entered the dining-room, she greeted her young visitor with pleased surprise. The morning worship only differed from the evening by the absence of singing, and then a happy party, including Miss Trotman and Gerty, sat down to breakfast.

"You're an early riser, and no mistake," said Percy to Kate, who sat opposite to him.

"Laura got up as early as I did," she said; "besides, it wouldn't be thought early in India; why, we're often out walking at four o'clock in the morning in the summer."

"I shouldn't like that much," said Frank.

"Oh, yes you would, because people have to sleep for three hours in the middle of the day on account of the heat."

"I say, Frank, my boy," said Percy, "here's another geography lesson for you! I've read about the heat in India, and I daresay it's awful."

"I don't think I used to mind the heat so much when it was dry as in the rainy season," said Kate. "The weather is almost as hot, and there's pouring rain every day, and sometimes thunder storms that are dreadful: the lightning and the thunder are close together, and before one flash or one clap is over another begins; so that it's all a blaze of light and roar of thunder till the storm is over, and then the rain comes down as if it were being emptied out of pails—sheets of water I've heard them called, not drops."

"I shouldn't like to live in India," said Frank, "and I'm jolly glad we've no storms like that in England."

"Haven't you some books about India?" asked Kate.

"Oh, yes," exclaimed Percy, "lots; but I'd rather hear all about it from those who have lived there."

"So would I, a jolly lot rather," said Frank.

"Come, come, my boys," said their mother with a smile, "while your visitor is teaching you geography, you are interrupting her breakfast, and giving her a lesson in boyish slang."

"I'm sorry, mamma," said Percy; "but I'll make amends;" and he began to load Kate's plate with good things, till she protested she could eat no more.

"What are you going to do after breakfast, Laura?" she asked presently.

"Oh, we sometimes go for a walk, but perhaps you would like a game at croquet first."

"Oh, yes, so much, but I cannot play well," she replied.

"It is too early for croquet, Laura," said her mother; "after this morning's mist the grass will be quite wet. Suppose you take Kate for a walk to the village, and then have a game of croquet after luncheon."

"Is that Levelsie, that we saw this morning? Oh, I should like to go there."

"Yes, and it will be much wiser to walk than



to play croquet ; for as the sun gains more power towards noon, the grass will dry quickly, and you can play without danger."

A very happy party of four left the Manor House that morning, and proceeded along the country road to a steep lane bordered by blackberry hedges, many of the berries ripe enough to gather. This was another novelty to Kate, and they lingered so long on the road that it was nearly eleven o'clock when they reached Levelsie, a pretty Essex village. Past clean but homely cottages, with little flaxen-haired, rosy children at the doors ; past the village inn, with benches in front of rough tables outside under the trees, and its signboard swinging from a tree branch, and exhibiting on each side that animal unknown to naturalists, a "Red Lion," and at last they reached the High Street of Levelsie.

A large inn used in the old coach days, a few private houses, occupied by the doctor and the lawyer, and two or three retired gentlewomen, a grocer's, a butcher's, and a stationer's shop on one side, and opposite to them a milliner's and a draper's, and at last a general shop, much frequented by the poorer inhabitants. This street, as it approached the country road, rose in a gentle ascent, and led in various directions to several flourishing farmhouses and two mansions

surrounded by park and meadow land. At a short distance from the High Street, and standing back from the road, stood the church and the Vicarage, picturesquely enclosed in trees.

To all this the young people from the Manor introduced the Indian-bred girl, and they could not complain of want of interest on her part. It amused her also to see the little children bow and curtsy, and the labouring men, and even the small shop-keepers, touch their hats or their hair to the young people from Levelsie Manor. They called also at the stationer's to order music and books from London, and had some commission at the draper's. At each place the respectful attention they received impressed Kate with the importance of the Manor House and its owners.

On their way home they met the vicar, to whom Percy introduced his companion as Miss Kate Eyre from India, the daughter of the late Colonel Eyre of the — Lancers, to her great satisfaction. In fact, Kate returned home with her natural pride augmented, and her own self-importance as a member of a family so honoured increased to that point which so often precedes a downfall.

The tongues of the young people rang merrily during luncheon ; for Mrs. Darville allowed her

children to talk at meals, under certain restrictions. This indulgence enabled her to discover the bent of each character, and its weakest points. A word, even a look from their mother, if she thought necessary, could at once produce silence.

While they talked on the occasion referred to, Mrs. Darville readily discovered that in both Percy and Kate Eyre a foolish pride was exerting its influence, and bringing out tendencies to self-assertion and irritable tempers.

"Percy," said his mother quietly. The boy looked up eagerly, and became silent; he understood the warning glance from those loving eyes. Percy's silence was contagious: even Kate paused in an impetuous defence of her own opinion. They were all relieved when Frank was desired to return thanks, and in a few moments the whole party, except Mrs. Darville, were on their way to the croquet lawn. We will follow them there.

"How shall we arrange for partners?" said Laura. "Shall I and Frank play against you and Percy, Kate?"

"No," she exclaimed; "I'll have Frank."

"Just as you like," said Laura; "but Percy plays best."

"I don't care," said the young lady. "Come g, Frank; we'll try to beat them."

It is not to be supposed that a pleasant game could be the result, when one player was rude and another indignant ; yet for a time all went on well. Presently Percy croqueted Kate's ball to an unheard-of distance.

"That's not fair ; you are cheating, Percy," she said.

"What," cried the youth, "do you accuse me of trying to win the game by meanness?"

"Of course I do ; why shouldn't you cheat as well as anybody else?"

"If you have been accustomed to associate with cheats and liars, I have not, Miss Eyre, and you may finish the game without me," said Percy, throwing down his mallet and walking away.

"You shan't go ! how dare you ? I'll do as I like, and call you what I please. Come back, or I'll throw the ball at you." She picked it up as she spoke, and flung it with all her force after him.

Percy heard the threat, and fortunately sprang aside to avoid a blow which might have broken his leg.

Terrified at such a display of violent temper, Laura and Frank ran from the croquet lawn in dismay, to appeal to their mother, leaving Kate alone, stamping her foot, and calling after them

in language that horrified Laura. Quickening her steps, she startled her mother by entering the dining-room by the window, and exclaiming, "Oh, mamma, do come! Kate is in such a dreadful passion; she threw a croquet ball at Percy, and I think she's going mad!"

Mrs. Darville rose in haste, and throwing a shawl over her head, hastened to the croquet lawn. Kate had thrown herself on the ground, and leaning over her was the Ayah, who from the window had heard the young lady's voice.

"Missie Kate, why you cry? what they do to you? Get up, come with poor Ayah, she take care of darling missie sahib." But Kate resisted the kind Hindoo with angry words, and even blows.

"Ayah, go into the house; leave this young lady to me."

"She shan't go—stay here, Ayah, I order you!" and Kate Eyre rose, and faced Mrs. Darville with a countenance distorted with rage and fury.

"You will do as I tell you, Ayah," she said calmly; "and if this mad child is not quiet, send in one of the men to hold her hands, that she may not do any mischief to herself or others."

As Mrs. Darville spoke, she firmly removed

Kate's hand from the woman's dress, and hastened her away.

"Kate Eyre," said Mrs. Darville, still holding her wrist firmly, "what has changed you from a quiet, lady-like child, to such a vulgar, pitiable object as this? I am ashamed to think that you can be the daughter of my dear schoolfellow, Alice Wilton. You can remain here if you like," as Kate struggled to free herself; "no one in my house shall be allowed to come near you till you can behave yourself like a reasonable being, not like a wild beast."

"If I mayn't have Ayah, I'll stay here."

"Very well," said Mrs. Darville, releasing her arm and turning away.

The next moment, like a young fawn, Kate was flying towards the house, calling, "Ayah, Ayah, come to me: you shall come."

"I'm here, missie darling," cried the woman, whose foolish indulgence had fostered this temper; and before Mrs. Darville could overtake her, the nurse and her pet were both in the young lady's bedroom, and the door on the landing locked, as well as that leading to Laura's room.

Mrs. Darville found the servants in the hall and her children in the dining-room positively alarmed. Dismissing the former to the kitchen

with a few calm words, she entered the room, and threw herself on the sofa, to calm, with an effort, her trembling nerves.

Laura was in tears, and as her mother said, "Come here, my child, and tell me how all this happened," Percy entered the room.

"Mamma, I *am* sorry ; it was my fault ; Kate irritated me so dreadfully, and I could not command myself ; but how could I suppose that a young lady could throw herself into such a frightful passion ? I think she must be mad."

"Ah, my boy," said his mother, "when evil dispositions and passionate tempers are not checked in childhood, but encouraged by indulgence, no one knows how they may end. You know the Latin proverb, Percy."

"*Ira brevis furor est*, you mean, mamma, but it is not short anger with Kate."

"No, because it was resisted. We must leave her to herself for a time, and I hope she may become amenable to reason."

"Oh, I hope she won't stay here, mamma," said Frank ; "and catch me playing croquet with Kate Eyre again."

"Well, now, suppose you ask Miss Trotman to bring Gerty to me, and then go and finish your game without Kate. It will soon be too cold and too damp for croquet."

The afternoon passed away, and the young people were in their rooms preparing for dinner. Mrs. Darville, who had already made some slight alteration in her dress, seated herself in the drawing-room and waited. It was growing dark, and she rang for the wax lights in the chandelier to be lighted.

Sarah quickly appeared with a taper, and after performing her task, she turned to her mistress and said, "The Ayah wants to speak to you, ma'am. May she come in?"

"Certainly, Sarah ; send her here."

Presently the soft-speaking Hindoo entered, and with clasped hands approached Mrs. Darville, and said,—

"Ma'am, sahib, forgive poor missie ; she very sorry, she never so passion again."

"Ayah," said the lady, "if you disobey me as you did to-day, Miss Eyre will be often again in a passion. You wish to be kind to your young mistress, but yours is not kindness, it is cruelty. If you really love her, you will not pet and coax her when she does wrong, as you did this afternoon. If she is ready for dinner, tell her to come herself and ask me to forgive her, and I will do so ; but, Ayah, remember, if you encourage Miss Eyre, and prevent me from doing her good, I shall be obliged to send you



back to India. She does not need a nurse or a maid now."

"I will try, ma'am, sahib ; I know I wrong, but I love missie."

"There, that will do," said Mrs. Darville, with pity in her heart for the loving Hindoo ; "now send your young lady to me quickly."

Kate had quite forgotten the necessary yet slight preparation for dinner, and therefore nearly ten minutes elapsed before she made her appearance, during which Percy Darville entered the drawing-room. Glad to find his mother alone, he advanced towards her, and said,—

"Mamma, I am very sorry you have been troubled. Kate Eyre's temper was all my fault ; I ought to have controlled myself, but she was so different to Laura ; and as to temper, I never supposed a young girl could be so violent."

"Kate inherits her mother's temper, Percy," replied Mrs. Darville. "Her mother, who was my school friend, was often in disgrace while at school for being passionate and quarrelsome. Kate has been brought up in India, an only child, indulged in every whim, with servants to wait upon her, and fly at her bidding. No wonder, therefore, that the child's unrestrained temper, when opposed, is a species of madness. Kate, however, has sent the Ayah to ask me to

forgive her, and she is coming herself presently. Ah, my son, I have a difficult task before me, and without wisdom from above I shall not succeed ; but you and your sister and brother can help me greatly by controlling yourselves."

"Mother, I will try," said Percy ; "I know I am the eldest, and what I do the others will do."

"God helping you, my boy ; we must pray to Him to subdue this young girl's fearful temper, and to help my children to set her a better example ; and now go, my boy : I wish to see Kate alone ; therefore will you keep Laura and Frank from the drawing-room ?"

"Yes, mother, I will," he replied, as he left the room.

The next minute Kate Eyre entered, and with her usual impulsiveness rushed across the room, and throwing herself on her knees by Mrs. Darville, exclaimed, in sobbing accents,—

"Oh, please forgive me ; I'm so sorry ; I won't be in such a passion again, and I'm so unhappy."

"My child," said Mrs. Darville, "you are making promises in your own strength, which you cannot perform ; but I readily forgive you, because you own your fault and are sorry. And now get up, Kate, and dry your tears ; I want to talk to you."

The young lady obeyed, and Mrs. Darville, rising, walked across the room to the door Kate had left open, which she closed and locked. Then she returned to the sofa, and seating herself, drew Kate down by her side, and putting her arm round her, said gently,—

“My dear, did you ever hear what dreadful things have been done by people in a passion? Why, this afternoon, if Percy had not started aside, the ball you threw at him would have broken his leg. And suppose little Gerty had been standing near, and the ball had struck her, it might have killed her. And, Kate, have you never read in the Bible that those who love God are to be patient and gentle, and how patient the dear Saviour was when the Jews spat upon Him, and scourged Him, and crowned Him with thorns, and afterwards crucified Him?”

“Oh, Mrs. Darville, I never heard much about God or Jesus Christ in India, excepting from poor Ayah, and I used to laugh at her when she wanted me to say my prayers. Oh, I know I’m very wicked, but I will try not to behave again as I did to-day.”

“If you will try, Kate,” said her friend,—who pitied the English child brought up in a heathen country, by parents professing Christianity, to be almost a heathen herself,—“if you will try to

conquer yourself, there is hope for you ; but without a stronger power than your own you will never succeed, and that strength will be given you if you pray for it."

"Oh, I can't, Mrs. Darville ; I don't know what to say ; and will God listen to me ?"

"Yes, Kate, always. He is called in the Bible 'the hearer and answerer of prayer.' And now, my dear, we have not time to talk any more—the dinner-bell will ring presently—but let us kneel down, and if you cannot ask God to forgive you, I will."

With a feeling of awe, Kate knelt by Mrs. Darville, and then the latter, in a few simple, earnest words, prayed that the young girl by her side might be forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake, and that she might have strength given her to conquer the proud selfishness and violent tempers which were so displeasing to God.

Kate rose from her knees softened and subdued. Mrs. Darville clasped the orphan girl to her heart, and kissing her, said, "Come, Kate, there is the dinner-bell ; brighten up, and let the young people see you are forgiven."

## CHAPTER IV.

### *AFTER SIX MONTHS.*

**T**HE long vacation came to an end, and the prospect of losing Percy and Frank till Christmas was not an agreeable one to any at the Manor House. Laura, however, tried to be useful to her mother, while Kate wandered about the house, making herself disagreeable to every one by her selfish complaints.

"Why can't the boys have a tutor at home? there will be no one now to swing us, and then in the evening nothing but music—no bagatelle, nor chess, nor anything."

"My dear," said Mrs. Darville, while they sat at an early breakfast on the day the boys were leaving, "if you really want so many companions, you would be happier at school. Next week, however, you and Laura will have lessons to prepare for the schoolroom. I have engaged a governess for you—a very clever lady—and I hope you will both profit by her instructions."

"Oh how jolly!" exclaimed Frank. "Ah,

wouldn't I go in for lessons if we could be taught at home! You girls are jolly lucky, that's all I can say."

Percy laughed: he was about to enter on his last term at school, and hoped at Christmas to pass an examination for the Military Academy at Woolwich.

"It's different for girls, Franky," he said; "but you and I have to fight our way through the world, with no end of bothers."

"Yes, you have," said Frank, "but I've got four years more to work at school before I'm as old as you. Oh, and I say I shall be awfully miserable when I have to go to school without you, old fellow."

"Time enough to think about that," said his mother. "And now, boys, you must be quick; the carriage will be here in a few minutes."

The usual commotion ensued, especially after the sound of wheels was heard approaching. Boxes were brought down, great-coats which were not put on and various other parcels being stowed away inside, and then, amidst kisses and farewells, in which Kate was treated as a sister, the carriage drove off, watched till it was out of sight by those who were left behind.

For a time Kate made every one uncomfortable by her selfish complaints; at last Laura's

gentle cheerfulness succeeded in drawing the restless girl's attention to the fact that they were going to begin school next week with a new governess, who was expected to arrive on Saturday.

Anything for a novelty to the restless, impatient girl—even a new governess; but, unfortunately, now was added another cause for impatience, a longing for Saturday to arrive.

It will be seen by this that Kate Eyre was still under the influence of the selfishness which formed the root of all other evil passions in her heart. Since that terrible display on the croquet lawn, a feeling of shame, added to a real wish to gain the favour of Mrs. Darville, had enabled her to check herself to a certain extent.

Perhaps the self-restraint which the children of Mrs. Darville practised when with Kate Eyre made her own efforts to do right easier. But the six months which followed the arrival of the governess formed a period of trial to the gentle mistress of Levelsie Manor, such as she had never before endured. More than once Miss Grant expressed a wish to give up her engagement at Christmas, but the entreaties and promises of the wayward girl, that she would not offend again, made her give way and remain.

The Christmas holidays arrived, and after the

boys returned home, Mrs. Darville, to the great delight of the young people, proposed to take apartments for a fortnight near London, that they might visit the Crystal Palace, the Polytechnic, and other Christmas entertainments suitable to young people.

Never had Kate been more amiable. She had learnt one fact, which influenced her—that to obtain kindness and indulgence from Mrs. Darville, she must not only restrain herself, but do everything to please her.

Before Miss Grant left for the holidays, the ladies had a serious talk together respecting Kate.

“You *will* return after Christmas for three months, Miss Grant,” said Mrs. Darville, in a tone of entreaty; “I have still hope that the precepts I teach, and the example I endeavour to influence my children to set before Kate Eyre, will be blessed to her advantage. She has stored in her memory, as you know, Scripture texts on every subject. She is naturally talented, and as far as religious knowledge goes, she knows the right way now, but it is beyond human power to eradicate the selfishness which has been fostered for so many years by false indulgence. Help me to pray, and wait, Miss Grant, for another three months; and after Easter, if



all our efforts fail, I will send her to school with Laura."

"Mrs. Darville," replied Miss Grant, "I will do my best with Kate Eyre for three months longer, but I fear that your proposal to send her to school is the only plan likely to be successful with such a child as Kate."

"Perhaps so, Miss Grant ; yet I have faith to believe that by some discipline, perhaps severe, my prayers for Kate Eyre will be answered."

Miss Grant departed for her Christmas holidays, convinced that nothing but school discipline of the severest kind would subdue the evil and selfish qualities of her incorrigible pupil. The governess at Levelsie Manor had not the strong faith of its gentle mistress. Never were such delightful Christmas holidays spent by Major Darville's children and their young companion as those of which we write. There were walks through the streets of London, with their wonderful shops ; visits to the Parks, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, the Bluecoat School, and other public buildings. Then journeys by train or omnibus to the Polytechnic, with its wonders of science which made Frank declare that it was the jolliest place he ever saw, and with no end of wonderful sights.

At last came a visit to the Crystal Palace,

with its Punch and Judy, its pantomime, its military bands, and its Christmas tree—new to all the young people but Percy. No wonder Kate was on her best behaviour ; no wonder she clung round Mrs. Darville's neck and said,—

“Oh, how kind of you to bring us to London ! Oh, I will try to be a good girl when we go home, Mrs. Darville, I will indeed !”

But the old nature was there still. Frank Darville returned to school alone, and his mother went to Woolwich to place Percy at the Academy just before Easter, leaving Miss Grant in charge of the house and her pupils till her return. While in London, Mrs. Darville intended to call upon a lady at Blackheath who took pupils, and who had been recommended to her very strongly, and to make arrangements for placing Laura and Kate under her care.

Although to a certain degree more under self-control, the impatience, the impetuous rudeness, and the quick, violent resentment with which Kate Eyre treated those who opposed or found fault with her, became at last unendurable. For a week or longer, perhaps, she would appear anxious to do right, and put a constraint on herself. Then something would occur to rouse her worst passions, and excepting to Mrs. Darville, her conduct would be that of a creature as

devoid of sense as the fiercest animal of the forest.

For a week or so previous to Mrs. Darville's visit to London, Kate's conduct had been so improved that Miss Grant had obtained permission to invite the young people from the Vicarage to spend a day at the Manor as soon as Frank arrived for his Easter holidays.

Easter this year occurred late; therefore, when Lucy and Ellen Vernon, with their brother George, made their appearance at the Manor House on Easter Tuesday, the April day wore the warmth and brightness of a summer's day.

An early dinner, and then the young people, attended by Miss Grant and Miss Trotman, hastened to the croquet lawn. Lucy Vernon was a few months older than Laura, and Ellen about the same age as Kate. Frank and George being schoolfellows, both approaching their twelfth year, were sworn friends. They, however, had been taught to make themselves agreeable to their sisters, as well as to their young lady friends, therefore a game of croquet passed off pleasantly.

Presently one of the farm servants appeared, and addressing Frank, said,—

“I've fastened up the new swing, Master

Frank ; but one of the ropes has been out in the wet all the winter, and I'm afraid it's not very strong, but I've been a swinging on it myself, and it seems all right. I be heavier than these 'ere young ladies and gentlemen."

"Oh, the swing! how nice!" exclaimed Kate; "where is it, Frank?"

"Between two trees in the shrubbery," he replied; "but if the rope's rotten, Kate, we can't swing."

"Nonsense, Frank! if it will bear that man, it will bear us—at all events, show us where it is."

"All right," said Frank, "come along," and then the young people, hearing the good news, threw down the mallets and started off at full speed to follow Frank and Kate, who were in advance of them.

"Where are you going?" asked Miss Grant, who sat at work on a seat close by.

"To the swing, Miss Grant," called out Kate: "Drew, the farm man, has been swinging, and he says it's all right."

Such a testimony as Drew's, a big heavy man, satisfied Miss Grant; if the swing would bear him, the rope must be strong, she reasoned.

"But he said he was afraid the rope was not very strong, Kate, for all that," said Frank.

"It must be strong to bear him. Why, Frank, if I ain't afraid, you oughtn't to be, for you're a boy."

"I'm not afraid for myself," said the boy proudly ; "but if you girls should be swinging, and the rope break while you are on it, wouldn't there be an awful row ! and everybody would say it was my fault."

"Oh well, it's all right ; we'll be careful at first, and not swing too high. Ah, there it is ! oh, what a splendid swing ! and such large thick ropes ; I'm sure they look strong enough."

The young people grouped themselves quickly round the trees, and then, after a little dispute as to which should swing first, Laura seated herself in the swing chair. None present, excepting Kate and Frank, had heard Drew's expressed fear that the ropes were not strong ; yet Laura asked to be swung gently and not too high, and finding it very pleasant she gave place to her visitors. When each had had one turn, Frank exclaimed,—

"Come, Kate, I thought you were so anxious to swing ; it's very kind of you to give it up to every one else in this way ; it's your turn now."

Must we own that in the heart of this selfish girl a determination had arisen that all the young people should try the swing before she

did, to prove its strength? Frank's remark roused her.

"Yes, it is my turn now," she exclaimed, rushing forward and seating herself on the chair; "who will swing me?"

Many volunteers came forward and gave her an impetus, George Vernon, a tall strong boy for his age, acting as chief impeller; and higher in the air than either swinger had yet ventured, rose the proud girl who thought only of self.

"None of them have gone so high as this," she said to herself; "they're all cowards, and Frank at the head of them; just as if such thick cord as this could break so easily. Oh, isn't this beautiful!" she called out aloud; "send me higher, George."

"Don't go any higher, Kate," cried Frank; "you had better stop now—besides, you've had the swing longer than your turn."

"I shall not stop, Frank; one more push, George!" she cried breathlessly.

"No, no!" cried Frank, suddenly dragging George from the swing. "Oh, stop her! the rope is breaking! look there!" and he rushed to catch the swing as it approached the ground. But before he could reach it the rope divided near the top, and brought down the chair as it fell with a sudden jerk, which threw Kate Eyre

with her back against the bar across which she hung as it touched the ground with great force.

The screams of the young girls brought Miss Grant and Miss Trotman to the spot in terrified alarm. The two boys had released poor Kate from the swing and laid her on the ground just as the ladies came near. Pale and insensible lay the proud girl, whose own self-will had caused the accident, but none present knew that, save George, Frank, and herself.

"What has happened? Send for Drew! call Sarah! Oh, is she dead?" were the frantic words of Miss Grant, while she stooped to lift the inanimate form from the ground, at the same time applying smelling salts to her nostrils.

But none of the young people were inactive. Miss Grant's requests were quickly obeyed.

Sarah arrived with water, accompanied by Drew, at whose appearance Miss Grant exclaimed,—

"Can you carry the young lady in, Drew? I tried to lift her. She's still alive; for when I attempted to raise her just now, she moaned with pain."

"She have hurt her back, ma'am; but if you'll send for a sofy mattress, I'll go for

Thomas, and we'll lay her on that, and carry her easily."

George Vernon had disappeared, but two of the servants, assisted by Frank, were very soon seen carrying the sofa from the drawing-room bodily, followed by Drew and Thomas. With the most tender gentleness, Kate was lifted from the ground and laid on the sofa, yet she again fainted with pain, and as Miss Grant walked by her side, sprinkling water on the death-like face, and now and then applying salts, she felt her heart sink with fear lest the pallor might be a sign of death.

At the dining-room window, by which they carried her in, George met them, flushed and panting. "I've been for the doctor: he's coming."

"Oh, you good, thoughtful boy," exclaimed Miss Grant; "how can I thank you enough?"

"Oh, Frank," said George, drawing back, "is she dead?"

"No; she moaned when they moved her. Oh, I say, there'll be no end of an upset about it now. I'm awfully sorry I had that swing put up. What will poor mamma say?"

"It wasn't your fault, Frank. I heard you tell Kate Eyre that it might not be safe, but she would have her own way; and then wanting



to be swung higher than anybody else. Oh, I say, old fellow, if I'd pushed her again after you called out, she would have been killed, and no mistake, and I should have done it. I'm awfully glad I heard you call out, for it's miserable enough as it is to think I was swinging her. I do hope she won't die."

Meanwhile in the drawing-room were assembled Miss Grant, Laura, and the doctor; the rector's daughters being comforted in the dining-room by the présence of Miss Trotman and Gerty.

The two former were watching with painful anxiety the doctor's examination of his patient.

"We must have the young lady undressed and in bed," were his first words.

At this moment shrieks were heard in the hall, and Ayah, who had been sent to the village on an errand just before the accident, rushed into the room, exclaiming,—

"Where my darling missie? Oh! she dead. Poor Ayah die too—Oh!"

"Silence, woman," said the doctor; "she is not dead. Do you want to kill her?"

The young girl's eyes opened at the voice. She lifted her arms, saying faintly,—

"Take me, Ayah."

"Shall Ayah carry you to bed, my dear?" asked Miss Grant.

"Yes," came feebly in reply.

"Can you carry her?" said the doctor.

"Oh, I very strong; missie not heavy."

But the attempt to move poor Kate caused a shriek that brought tears to every eye in the room.

"She must be carried on the sofa cushion," said the doctor. "Your staircase is wide; it can be done easily. I will assist."

In a few minutes the doctor, assisted by the Ayah and the housemaid, had borne the injured girl to her room, and then, after each article of clothes to be removed had been cut or torn from her, Kate was placed in bed.

After administering a slight sedative to ease the pain, the doctor left the room, accompanied by Miss Grant, trusting the faithful Hindoo to her loving watch with great confidence.

"I have telegraphed to Chelmsford from the post office, for Dr. Anderson," he said, as they descended the stairs, "but he cannot reach here till five at the earliest. I fear there is injury to the spine, but not sufficient to produce paralysis of the lower limbs. Outwardly there is no abrasion of the skin, but no doubt bruises will show themselves. At all events, madam, I will

not decide on the extent of the injury until I have examined the case with my colleague."

"Will you kindly send this telegram to Mrs. Darville, doctor, if you are returning to Levelsie?"

"Certainly I will," he replied. "I have one or two patients to see, but I shall return here with Dr. Anderson; his carriage will call at my house for me as it passes."

"MISS GRANT TO MRS. DARVILLE.

"Please return quickly. Kate Eyre has met with an accident. No immediate danger."

This was the telegram that made Mrs. Darville leave Percy with friends at Woolwich, and return home by a train that enabled her to arrive at the Manor House before nine.

Miss Grant ran out to the carriage door to meet her. The mistress of Levelsie Manor, although pale, was calm.

"Kate is living—she is in bed. Dr. Lynn and Dr. Anderson have seen her. She fell from the swing, and has injured her back, but there are no dangerous symptoms."

"Thank God," were Mrs. Darville's first words as she entered the drawing-room and threw herself on the sofa. "I will see her presently; is she sensible?"

"Yes, but under the influence of a sedative now. Perhaps you had better not see her yet. Dr. Lynn promised to be here again this evening ; he will tell you all about it."

Before long the energetic little doctor made his appearance, and then Mrs. Darville learnt with deep pain that her friend's orphan girl was doomed to lie on her bed or on an invalid chair for months or even years, from injury to the spine.

Perhaps in the lifetime of her dearly loved nursling the patient Hindoo had never been so deeply tried as now.

When not under the influence of an opiate, Kate Eyre's impatience rendered her sick-room a scene to be avoided. Pain to an impatient spirit provokes angry rebellion against God, and sometimes when Ayah would say, "God send pain, missie, to make us good," Kate would reply, "It won't make me good. I don't care. God is cruel to give me such pain ; and you hurt me on purpose, Ayah, I know you do ; and I won't be patient."

At other times the poor ill-trained girl would make herself quite ill and exhausted by uttering agonising shrieks and groans, that went to the heart of every one in the house.

By degrees, however, the strong, healthy

frame became weakened with constant pain and excitement. The opiates had more power, the pain decreased, and was replaced by utter helplessness ; and fears began to arise that after all Kate Eyre would sink from exhaustion. But the doctors, who saw her frequently, had no such fears ; they hailed with hopefulness the cessation of pain and the calmness of the patient.

"We must keep her up now with tonics and nourishing food, Mrs. Darville," said Dr. Anderson, "and by-and-by an invalid carriage may be necessary to enable her to breathe the air in your pleasant grounds, and a reclining chair when she is able to sit up."

"And when will she be able to walk ?" asked Mrs. Darville.

Dr. Anderson shrugged his shoulders, and replied,—

"I cannot say, Mrs. Darville ; at all events, even if Miss Eyre should feel strong enough for such an effort, she must not attempt to walk for a year, or perhaps two ; or I might say until she has done growing ; perhaps at seventeen, for she is already tall for her age."

## CHAPTER V.

### *UNCLES AND AUNTS.*

**I**N a large well-furnished room over a lawyer's private offices, a morning or two after Kate Eyre's accident, sat a family at breakfast. The table was well supplied, and the arrangements neat and in good taste.

At the foot of the table sat a gentleman apparently between forty and fifty, whose dark eyes and hair would have proved the relationship between himself and his niece, Kate Eyre, who greatly resembled her Uncle Wilton.

Mr. Wilton held in his hand an open letter, over which he was knitting his brows, and the look in his eyes had no little of the angry petulance so often shown by Kate Eyre.

"You have a letter there that annoys you, Charles. Is it on business?" said a lady at the head of the table.

"You can read for yourself, Fanny," he replied, tossing it on the table, from which the young people passed it on to their mother.

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Mrs. Wilton, whose faded, anxious face bore traces of having been pretty in her youth, had not read the letter through when she exclaimed,—

“Charles, I won’t have that girl here, and while she’s ill too, she would be unbearable. I daresay this accident arose from her own temper ; and to have another here, with our eight children,” she added, almost in tears, “would kill me.”

“Oh, mamma,” exclaimed a girl of fourteen, the eldest of the five children at the table, “please don’t have Cousin Kate here again : I’m sure she made us all miserable even at Christmas.”

“Oh, yes, I remember,” cried George, a boy of twelve, interrupting his sister ; “and what awful rows there used to be when she was here, while we were home for the Michaelmas holidays. She wanted everything her own way, and if we wouldn’t let her, oh didn’t she storm, and no mistake !”

“The girl has fallen from a swing, and is very much hurt, George : you should be sorry for your cousin,” said Mr. Wilton, a memory of his dead sister causing momentary pity for her child. “But finish the letter, Fanny ; you will find that Kate is too ill to be moved, but Mrs.

Darville thinks I ought to run down and see her, as her nearest living relative, excepting Mr. Eyre, her father's brother, who resides in Ireland."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Wilton, "and I suppose Mrs. Darville has also written to him."

"No doubt she has ; but Gerald Eyre will, I fear, scarcely trouble himself to travel such a long journey to look after a niece he has never seen, especially as Kate's property goes back to him if she dies."

"Oh, Charles, don't talk of anything so shocking ; yet I couldn't have Kate here ; she's too much for me."

"It will not be necessary, for I'm sure the poor girl will be taken care of by Mrs. Darville," said her husband. "Poor Alice spoke so highly of her in her last letter to me. Besides, there's that Indian woman with the girl."

"Yes, poor silly creature," replied Mrs. Wilton ; "how she did indulge that girl to be sure, and take her part against my children like a tigress !"

"Well, I cannot decide what is best to be done, till I have seen the child," said Mr. Wilton rising. "I will, however, write to Mrs. Darville to-day, and tell her I hope to be at Lerelsie to-morrow afternoon, and I can stay till Monday



morning, no doubt, so that my visit need not be hurried."

"Yes, Charles, so you can ; the change will do you good, and I think the boys will behave properly while you are away," said his wife, yet with a dread at her heart. More than one of her children inherited the family temper, which the gentle, timid mother was unable to subdue.

"Mamma, we will," said Frank, the second boy, who most resembled his mother in character. Well for the other violent spirits, and above all for their mother, that they had a father living, whose firm discipline ruled the house.

Such a discipline and an English training, and Kate Eyre would have grown up a very different character. No wonder Solomon should leave so many exhortations to parents respecting the training of children. No wonder he wrote the words, "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

Mr. Wilton's first emotions on reaching Levelsie Manor were those of self-congratulation that his sister's wayward child was not under his own roof.

As he stood by the bedside of the suffering girl, pity and regret were mingled with the

deepest gratitude to the kind lady who bore with Kate's angry impatience and utter indifference to the trouble and sorrow she was causing to all around.

"Are you not pleased to see your uncle, Kate?" asked Mrs. Darville, gently.

"No, I don't want anybody to come and see me; take him away, Ayah; he makes me worse."

Mr. Wilton turned and left the room, followed by Mrs. Darville, whose eyes were full of tears.

"Does she really suffer much?" asked Mr. Wilton, as they entered the drawing-room.

"The doctors say no, because these injuries are usually attended with a kind of numbness, which of course renders the patient unable to move. It is this that excites so much impatient irritability in Kate. She has had her own way for so many years, that she is impatient under the gentlest restrictions, and this is certainly not a gentle restriction, and therefore torture to such a proud, undisciplined spirit."

"How can I be grateful enough to you, Mrs. Darville?" said Mr. Wilton, after that lady had described some little of her trouble with Kate Eyre during the six months of her stay, and the particulars of the accident. "No doubt the child ought to be with her own relatives; but

we have eight children, and my wife is not strong ; I am sure she could never manage such a character as Kate."

"Do not express gratitude to me, Mr. Wilton. Your sister was my dearest school friend, and her child possesses much of her mother's warm-hearted and noblest qualities, crushed down and hidden by selfishness and impatience, which have been fostered by neglect and indulgence.

"The doctors tell me," she continued, "that her irritable impatience is producing feverish symptoms, and retarding her recovery ; yet I have faith to believe that this discipline is sent in mercy, and that Kate will rise from her bed of pain changed and subdued."

"I hope your anticipations will be realized, Mrs. Darville ; at all events, if it is so, she will have to thank you for it."

"With the blessing of God on my efforts," she replied ; "there is no hope without that. And now, Mr. Wilton, you will remain to dinner, or perhaps till Monday ; we have plenty of spare bedrooms ; and perhaps before you leave, Kate may grant you a more pleasant interview."

Mr. Wilton gladly accepted the invitation. The well-ordered house, so mansion-like in size and so picturesque, was very attractive, and he

returned home on Monday to a late dinner with his wife alone, full of the pleasant visit he had paid.

"My dear," he began, "it was one of the wisest things Alice ever did, to ask her friend, Edith Darville, to receive her child ; I regretted it at first, because the £300 a year would have been useful to us ; but I don't now. Why, to live in such a delightful spot as Levelsie Manor would be worth that sum, without the care and attention of Mrs. Darville."

"Did you see her own children, Charles ?"

"Only the two girls, a pretty little girl of six, and the eldest, Laura, in her fifteenth year ; that girl's example alone ought to have influenced Kate long ago. I heard all about the accident, at the Vicarage, where we stayed to luncheon after morning service yesterday. The vicar's eldest boy, George, was pushing Kate when she fell from the swing, and I could see, though the boy tried to hide it, that her own impetuous temper hastened the catastrophe."

Mr. Wilton then described the reception he received from his niece on his arrival, and the opinion held by the doctors.

"Mrs. Darville looks at everything from a religious point of view ; she considers this accident to Kate as a discipline sent by God in

mercy, and is hopeful that it will be the means of changing a lion into a lamb ; but I doubt it. Why, when I went to wish her good-bye this morning, she said, ' You're not going to take me to London, uncle ; Mrs. Darville, don't let him ! I won't go to be with all those horrid boys.' Mrs. Darville almost made matters worse by leaning over her and saying, ' Hush, dear, you are too ill to be moved anywhere yet.' ' Oh, yes, I know,' she screamed out ; ' why don't the doctors cure me ? Oh, I can't bear to be like this.' "

" How dreadful, Charles ! and what did you say ? "

" What could I say, dear ? " replied her husband. " I left the room, grieved at the trouble devolving upon Mrs. Darville, but thankful, as you may suppose, that the girl is not here, if only for your sake, Fanny."

" Charles," said Mrs. Wilton after a pause, " Mrs. Darville may say what she likes ; that girl will never change, if she lives to be a hundred ! "

Let us bear with the impatient sufferer for a few weeks longer, and visit her again after the decision of Dr. Anderson, which ends our last chapter.

May was drawing towards its close, and the

sweet scent of flowers filled the air, and their perfume reached the open window of Kate's bedroom. On this day she had allowed herself to be partially dressed and carried to the sofa near the window, with but few impatient words. The pale face looked fair by contrast to the smooth bands of dark hair braided across her forehead, while the curls, thinned by the hair falling off, were enclosed in a net behind. The pink-trimmed flannel dressing-gown hung loosely around the slight form, once so plump and full of health, and the thin pale hands lay helplessly clasped together on her lap.

By her side sat Mrs. Darville, alternating betwixt hope and fear. More than once lately a smile of thanks for any attention, or a kind word to the Ayah, from the still fretful girl, had raised that lady's hopes. But now she took the proffered delicacy without a word of thanks, and lay with closed eyes, while the restless working of her interlaced fingers showed she was not asleep. Presently Mrs. Darville saw tears on the dark eyelashes.

"My darling," she said, rising and gently wiping the tears away with her pocket-handkerchief, "what grieves you?"

"Oh, how can you call me darling?" said the poor girl, whose conscience had been clam-

orous during her hours of weakness. "I wonder you can speak to me at all, Mrs. Darville."

"My dear child," was the reply, "now is the time I should speak to you, because I know that God has softened your heart."

"I suppose He has," she said gently; "but I never asked Him. Yet I do want to tell you I am sorry for being so troublesome and impatient. And then there's poor Ayah! How can she continue to love me, when I've been so unkind to her? I asked her to forgive me this morning, and what do you think she said?"

"Tell me, Kate; but I think I can guess."

"Oh, I'm sure you can, Mrs. Darville; she said, 'God not forgive me, missie, if I not forgive you.' Dear Mrs. Darville, poor Ayah knows God better than I do."

"I am glad you have found that out, dear Kate," said her kind friend; "but you must not talk too much to-day, on your first getting up: let me tell you something pleasant instead. The doctors think you are getting better, and Dr. Anderson advised me to order an invalid carriage for you, that you may be drawn out in the grounds first, and by-and-by in the country roads and to the village: shall you like that?"

"Oh, yes, indeed I shall. And this sofa tires me; I almost want to be in bed again."

"I daresay you do, dear Kate ; but there is another comfort ordered for you. The doctor said it was necessary for you to have an invalid chair, with bars to lift up and down, so that you may sit nearly upright, or lie back almost flat."

"And am I to have that chair as well as the carriage?" she asked.

"Yes, dear Kate, they are both coming to-morrow by train. Dr. Lynn described what he wanted to your Uncle Charles when he was here, and he ordered both from the makers as soon as I sent him word that you were well enough to use them."

"Oh, how good everybody is to me!" said Kate, as she heard all this. "Will God ever forgive me for being so impatient and unkind?"

"I know He will, for Jesus' sake, my darling ; and now you must rest, and not talk any more. In a week, when you are stronger, you shall tell me all that is in your heart."

A week passed, in which Kate's strength increased daily, although she was still unable to stand without help.

During this period the invalid carriage and chair arrived from London, and never had Kate Eyre shown such sincere gratitude as on her



first ride through the park-like grounds and shrubberies of Levelsie Manor.

Mrs. Darville walked by her side. At present she preferred to be Kate's companion, instead of Laura. She felt intuitively that the young girl would be more ready to open her heart to an elder than to one of her own age.

Day after day during that week she walked by the side of the helpless girl, hearing and answering timid remarks, which proved the workings of conscience.

At length, one day when a morning of rain kept Kate a prisoner in her reclining chair, which had been raised to almost a sitting posture, Mrs. Darville entered the room.

"The rain has ceased, Katie," she said, "but I feel it is still too damp for you to venture out."

"Oh, I would rather sit here by the window; the air is fresh, and the flowers smell so sweet after the rain."

Mrs. Darville advanced and looked out upon the scene which Kate had praised on the first morning after her arrival at the Manor House.

"It looks larger and prettier from my window," said Kate, "especially now the sunshine is sparkling on the rain-drops as if they were diamonds."

"Does that remind you of anything, Kate?"

"No," she replied. "What is it like?"

"Sunshine after rain," replied Mrs. Darville, "always reminds me of the happiness experienced by those who have done wrong, when that wrong has been repented of and forgiven."

"Oh, yes, I know; you mean that it appears so by a simile, one of the figures of speech that Miss Grant explained to us, and made us search for illustrations in the Bible, and I remember what a number we found."

"And what is my simile, Kate?" asked Mrs. Darville with a smile.

"I can't put it into proper words," she replied; "but tears of repentance are like the rain-drops and forgiveness—No, that is not exactly like sunshine."

"But it would be, Kate, if the person you had offended was kinder and more loving to you than ever."

"Oh, yes, that would be sunshine, and make the tears of repentance brighter even than diamonds."

"True, my dear Kate," said Mrs. Darville; "and it is the brightest of all sunshines when it is God who forgives."

There was a pause, during which Kate looked thoughtful and hesitating; at last she said,—

"Mrs. Darville, will you sit down and stay with me a little while? I want to tell you something."

"Certainly I will stay, my dear Kate," replied Mrs. Darville, drawing a chair near the window, and close to Kate. Then she waited with feelings of the deepest emotion, for she instinctively knew, or at least hoped, what Kate wished to tell her.

"Mrs. Darville, have I been more patient lately?" was the timid question, spoken in a low voice.

"Yes, dear Kate; and it has made me very glad."

"Ah, but I have been always only patient to you, Mrs. Darville; Ayah and Sarah know that; yet I do try to be patient to everybody."

"I believe you do, dear; and if you pray for strength to act rightly, God will answer you."

"I know He will, for He has already, Mrs. Darville; for even while I was so impatient and wicked just at first, all those texts I learnt every morning to repeat to you would come into my mind. You know I've got a good memory, and first one and then another would be repeated over and over in my head, as if they were telling me how impatient and unkind I was."

"Can you remember any of them now, Kate?"

"Oh, yes, all of them, especially those about patience. There was part of a verse kept running in my head—I forget where it is—'righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.' Then those verses in the Epistle of St. James—'the trying of your faith worketh patience;' and then about the patience of Job, and that we were to take the prophets for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience; and all these only made me worse."

"And did you suffer much pain at this time, Katie?"

"Not half so much as I wanted everybody to think. Oh, Mrs. Darville, sometimes, when you would remind me of those texts in the Hebrews, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;' I knew them all so well, and oh, was it not dreadful! they made me feel angry with God, like Jonah."

For some minutes there was silence; Kate had closed her eyes and lay still. At last Mrs. Darville said, "Do you feel different now, Kate?"

"Oh, yes, dear Mrs. Darville, I hope I do, and it was another of your texts that set me thinking."

"And what verse was that, Katie?"

"Oh, that one in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that you told me you once heard a great preacher take for his text, and afterwards the sermon was called the 'Ancestry of Hope.' I do not think I understood the meaning of it, but the words came to my mind—'Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope.' And then I thought perhaps this illness is my tribulation, for I knew the word meant suffering, and God has sent it to me as a punishment for being so proud and selfish; for it was all through wanting to show the others how high I could swing, that I told George Vernon to push me higher. Oh, Mrs. Darville, if Frank hadn't stopped him, I should have been killed."

"Then the accident was not Frank's fault," said Mrs. Darville, with a load lifted from her heart.


"What, dear Frank's fault!" exclaimed the changed girl. "Oh, no, indeed! if I had listened to him, it would never have happened. But I'm not sorry, for it is teaching me patience. And oh, dear Mrs. Darville, if you hadn't made

me learn all those Bible words, I should never have learnt patience at all."

"Thank God, my dear child, for what you have told me ; and now you must lie still, darling, and try to sleep ; you have talked quite enough."

## CHAPTER VI.

### *GERALD EYRE'S ASTONISHMENT.*

“UCY, here is a letter that has been lying at the post office for me nearly six weeks, from Charles Wilton.”

“Dear me, how annoying! is the letter of importance?”

“Well, rather, my dear; it encloses one to Charles, from Mrs. Darville, that friend of my brother's wife, who took charge of her child at Alice's dying request.”

“Oh, yes, I remember; I suppose Mrs. Darville is sick of her task, and wants to send the girl back to her uncle. I'm sure I should, if I were in her place; don't you remember how she upset all the pleasant games with her cousins and those nice children of Mrs. Darville, when we met them at the Christmas party in Duke Street, and I——”

Mrs. Gerald Eyre spoke so rapidly and without a pause, that until a strange look in her husband's face checked her, he was unable to explain. Then he said hastily,—

"Look here, Lucy ; don't bring up the poor child's faults now ; she may be dead and buried by this time : just read Mrs. Darville's letter."

Mrs. Eyre was not really an unfeeling woman, but having no children of her own, she could make no allowance for the faults of childhood or youth. She would have liked to place old heads on young shoulders, and by so doing people the juvenile world with deformities which nature would disown.

With such sentiments, no wonder that when her husband interrupted her, she was about to declare that she had never known a child so completely like a little fury as Kate Eyre.

She took the letter from her husband, and read it in silence ; yet even while she pitied the poor young girl who had been so injured, she could not resist the conviction, that to nurse an impatient, self-willed child under such circumstances must be a terrible task, and therefore it would be a merciful release for herself and every one concerned at the Manor House, if, as her husband feared, the child of Alice Wilton had been removed by death.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor My ways your ways, saith the Lord," and well for us all that it is so.



Perhaps Mrs. Eyre's conscience smote her as she thus reflected ; for she said,—

“ I am glad we are on our way home, Gerald, at all events ; we shall reach England in a few days, and after seeing Charles Wilton in Duke Street, you can run down to Levelsie Manor, and learn all the particulars.”

“ All right, my dear ; I shall be impatient to do so, and to explain the cause of my not writing in reply. The fact is, Lucy, I forgot to leave an address at the post office here, and I might have written from Nice to have letters forwarded, but I did not expect any of importance, and I had no wish to be bothered with them.”

“ Of course not ; but it's rather unfortunate that this particular one should have been lying there so long. I suppose it was addressed to you at our Dublin house.”

“ Yes, and forwarded from there to Fenmore. The address has the Ireland postmark ; and I can't help being vexed about it,” continued Mr. Eyre, “ for Kate is my own brother's child ; and if anything has happened in consequence of the accident, I shall be very grieved.”

Mr. and Mrs. Eyre had been spending a few months at Nice, and were returning to their beautiful estate near Dungarvon, in Ireland, for

the summer. They did not delay longer now, but returned through France by rail, crossing from Calais to Dover, and reaching Victoria Station a few weeks after the day described in the last chapter.

When Mrs. Eyre judged her husband's niece so harshly, she knew nothing of the conversation between the now patient girl and her best earthly friend, which has been related to the reader. A letter from her Uncle Gerald reached Levelsie Manor the morning after Mr. and Mrs. Eyre had arrived in London. Before writing it, Mr. Eyre had paid a hasty visit to Duke Street, not very far distant from the Grosvenor Hotel, at which they were stopping.

Mr. Wilton, who knew nothing of Kate Eyre's present sentiments, could only relieve Mr. Eyre from his greatest fear.

"Don't trouble about not answering my letter," said Mr. Wilton. "If you had been here, you could have done no good. The girl was in the best hands, and is still. I went down to Levelsie, and thankful I was to find the poor child in such good quarters. I was invited to stay from Saturday to Monday, and I had every opportunity for discovering that a better home and a kinder friend for my sister's child could not possibly be found."

“Was she very much injured by the fall?” asked Mr. Eyre.

“Yes, I am sorry to say, and I have no doubt the pain she suffered would have been hard to endure by the most patient sufferer; but you cannot imagine the pitiable object the child presented,—whose every whim had been gratified, and who would scream at even the scratch of a pin,—when called upon to endure actual pain. In fact, I was glad to escape from the room. Some of my own children have by nature impetuous and violent tempers, which I try to subdue: God grant none of them may ever be like their cousin in this respect.”

“Mrs. Darville must have had her hands full,” said Mr. Eyre. “But you tell me Kate is better; will she ever recover the use of her limbs?”

“I cannot say; but the doctors have ordered a reckning chair and an invalid carriage, in which she can be drawn out of doors. I procured them in London, and they were sent down a few weeks ago.”

After some more explanations and hopeless conjectures that Kate Eyre was not likely to improve either in health or in character, Mr. Eyre rose and said,—

“I must write before post time, and tell Mrs. Darville to expect me to-morrow; but I dread

the ordeal : if she resented your sympathy and anxiety for her welfare, what will she say to me for having neglected her so long ? ”

Mr. Wilton shrugged his shoulders. “ It will need something more than an illness to make Kate Eyre other than what she is—a selfish, impetuous, spoiled child, without a spark of self-control.”

Yes, Mr. Wilton was right : something *more* than an illness is needed with all of us to subdue evil tempers and the love of self, especially when not corrected in childhood. Mr. Wilton’s children had not been indulged or so badly trained as their Cousin Kate, and while the poor girl was to be pitied on this account, it needed a severer discipline from her heavenly Father to bring her to Himself.

“ I have had a letter from your Uncle Gerald,” said Mrs. Darville, on the morning after that gentleman’s arrival in London ; “ he has been abroad, and my letter about your accident only reached him just before he started for England. Shall you be glad to see him, Kate ? he is coming this afternoon.”

“ Yes, Mrs. Darville,” and she added with a smile, “ I shall treat him better, when he comes, than I did Uncle Charles ; but they’re both almost strangers to me, you know ; I never saw

either of them till I came to London last autumn, and I'm sure I behaved very badly at Christmas. I wanted to have my own way in everything, and the boys wouldn't let me. My cousins are not like your boys, Mrs. Darville; *they* never were rude, even on that first day, when Percy was so angry. Oh, wasn't I in a wicked passion then! I wonder you did not send me away directly."

"Kate, dear," said her kind friend, "I was praying for you then, and I waited patiently: I knew God would answer my prayer in some way, and I feel that He has."

"Oh, Mrs. Darville, there's another of your texts, 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;' and then there's another verse in the same psalm, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart.' Oh how glad I am that I know so many Bible words! I should never have been different, if I had not been taught that wonderful Book. Why, if people who believe in Jesus Christ would only follow the Bible rules for doing right, there would not be so many wicked people in the world."

"Perhaps not, dear; it is not enough to say we believe in the doctrines of the Bible, if we do not obey its precepts. And now, dear Kate, I

can hear Drew coming to carry you downstairs to your carriage."

The farm labourer, promoted to be Miss Eyre's outdoor attendant, and to draw her in the invalid carriage, had been provided with a quiet livery, which he wore on these occasions. Rough and unlettered as he might be, yet he lifted the wasted form in his arms, and carried her downstairs with the greatest tenderness.

"Do I hurt you, miss?" he asked, as he placed her, with the Ayah's assistance, in the carriage.

"No, indeed, Drew," she replied; "you are very kind. I hope I'm not heavy."

"Lor, no, miss, not much heavier than a doll;" and he added to himself, as he moved forward, "I only wish you was heavier."

"Oh, ain't that dear young miss altered!" he said one day, in the kitchen. "Lor, before that accident, she used to order me about just as if I was a nigger; and now she talks to me so gentle and pretty-like. I hope she ain't a going to die."

On that afternoon, after a rest on the sofa, Kate's reclining chair was brought downstairs, and Kate placed in it for the first time in the drawing-room. After this exertion, the angle of the chair-back was increased to almost a recumbent position, that the young girl might rest, and

be strong to receive her uncle. The chair was placed near the window, which, as well as that in the dining-room, opened on the verandah. The perfume of the flowers filled the room, and a gentle breeze fluttered the lace curtains.

Mrs. Darville sat near her at work. Presently Kate said,—

“How lovely it is here ! but I am wishing for so many things, and I try not to be impatient. I’ve been longing to ask you a favour so many times, and I didn’t dare. I wanted you to let me call you ‘auntie,’ but I thought you would not care to adopt one like me for your niece.”

“Call me aunt or auntie, if you like, darling,” said Mrs. Darville, rising and kissing her ; “and I hope to be proud of my new niece by-and-by.”

“Thank you. Oh, I am glad !” and tears of happiness rose in the young girl’s eyes. Mrs. Darville reseated herself, and presently asked,—

“And what else do you wish for, Katie ?”

“I wish Percy and Frank were here, auntie ;” and she smiled as she spoke. “I remember how patiently they bore with my selfishness and passionate tempers, and I want to ask them to forgive me. I have asked Laura,” she continued, “haven’t I, Laura dear ?” she added, holding out her hand, “and she’s forgiven me.”

“Yes, dear Kate,” said the gentle girl, “long

ago ;" and she stooped to kiss the pale face. " And I'm sure Percy and Frank have forgotten your little upsets with them by this time."

" I daresay they have, but I should like to tell them I'm sorry ; and there's Uncle Charles, too ; I wish he would come again. So I've lots of wishes," she continued, with a faint laugh, " but I'm trying to be patient."

" And now there's your book, Katie," said Mrs. Darville ; " would you not like to read for a while ? you must not tire yourself with talking."

" Oh yes, I forgot my book. How glad I was when Dr. Lynn said I might read !"

A quarter of an hour of almost total silence ensued, to be broken, however, by the sound of wheels.

" There is Uncle Gerald," exclaimed Kate ; and Mrs. Darville, seeing her turn pale, rose and left the room to caution Mr. Eyre, leaving Laura standing by the chair. In a few minutes the door was thrown open, and two gentlemen stood on the threshold, and paused as if unable to advance. Never in the lifetime of either was that scene forgotten.

Near the window, shaded from the afternoon sun by the verandah, stood a reclining chair, and upon it, half lying, half sitting, lay Kate Eyre



The dark curls, released from the net, were scattered on the pillow, forming a framework for a pale, gentle face, on which the eyebrows and eyelashes looked darker by contrast. An Indian shawl, of varied colours and exquisite beauty, added brightness to the brilliant eyes which were raised to greet the visitors, while the lips parted in a smile. By the chair, as if to enhance the effect by contrast, stood a tall, fair girl, with golden hair, soft blue eyes, and the glow of health in her cheeks, attired in a simple white dress, while the large old-fashioned drawing-room and its surroundings finished the picture.

One glance from the visitors was sufficient to take in the scene as a whole, although the salient parts presented themselves afterwards.

"Uncle Gerald and Uncle Charles too!" exclaimed Kate, holding out both hands. "Oh, how kind to come and see me!"

The two gentlemen advanced, both in a state of bewilderment: one from what he remembered of Kate Eyre in the past, and the other from what he had been told.

Mr. Eyre recovered himself first. "My poor child," he said, as he kissed her, "I am sorry to see you like this."

"Oh, uncle, don't be sorry. The doctors tell me I must lie here on my back, and not try to

walk, for three years, till I've done growing ; and I'm glad, for this illness has taught me to be patient, and I am sure God has sent me such a trial because He loved me, and wanted me to learn to love Him. Uncle Charles," she added, "I was wishing for you to come ;" and at the words Mr. Wilton pressed forward to kiss his niece, with tears in his eyes.

"I'm glad I came, dear Kate ; but why did you so much wish to see me ?" he asked.

"Because I wanted to ask you to forgive me for being so unkind and rude to you when you came last."

"You were ill then, my dear, and hardly knew what you said or did."

"Yes, I did know," she replied ; "but while I have God for my Father, I shall never be so passionate and self-willed again, unless I forget to pray to Him for strength to conquer my wicked tempers ; but I hope He will not leave me to myself again as long as I live. Say you forgive me, Uncle Charles."

"Forgive you, my dear child," said her uncle, in a voice full of emotion, "God knows I do so with all my heart, as I hope to be forgiven myself."

Mrs. Darville now interfered.

"You will stay till Monday, gentlemen," she

said ; "let me send your carriage to the Crown, and Drew shall attend to you. I have two bedrooms in readiness, and perhaps," she added in a low tone, as they moved towards the door, "it will be as well to leave our invalid alone for a while. You shall see your uncles again after dinner, Kate," she continued, addressing her ; "and you will like to be quiet, I know, for a little while."

"Yes, auntie, and perhaps I can read myself to sleep." But other thoughts of the happiness which follows the confession of a fault and the certainty of forgiveness, were soothing the young girl, who, in the very bloom of her youth, had been struck down, and deprived of the power of joining in those active employments which are so essential to early youth.

All this passed through her mind as she lay listening to the song of the birds, and inhaling the sweet breath of spring which came through the open window.

"What comforts I have had amidst it all, and what kind friends," she said to herself, "and perhaps at the end of three years I may be stronger and better than ever. I will try to be patient and wait, for I am sure God sent me this trial in love, and to save me from doing worse. If I had gone on in that selfish, passionate way

till I grew up, I might perhaps have done some dreadful harm to one of my dearest friends. Ah, and here comes to my mind another of dear auntie's texts, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Kate Eyre is now a woman. By degrees, as she ceased growing, her strength returned, and she was at last able to take long walks without even feeling fatigue. She still resides with her dear Aunt Edith, as she continues to call Mrs. Darville; and among the children of Percy and Laura, Aunt Kate is the most loving and patient of all loving aunts. When either of them shows signs of temper or self-will, she tells them the story of her fall from the swing, which never loses its interest; and as soon as they can understand it, she teaches them to repeat three texts: "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness" (Gal. v. 22); "Patient in tribulation" (Rom. xii. 12); and "Tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. v. 3).











